



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New England District

# Yankee Engineer

Big E! 2000

## *Big E! Special Edition*



Photo by Rick Magee.

*Park Rangers greet visitors and answer questions at the Big E.*

## **Army Corps of Engineers Public Ambassadors** Who the Corps Park Rangers are and what they do

For more than 20 years, the Park Rangers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, have served as our public ambassadors at flood control projects, recreation areas and at public events throughout the New England region.

The Eastern States Exposition, or Big E, is the sixth largest fair in North America, and will run this year from September 15 to October 1. Park Rangers, who are usually the first and only

contact the public has with the Army Corps of Engineers, do more than just hand out information at state fairs. These committed individuals are also an integral part of the Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Management Program.

### **Role of Corps Park Rangers at Flood Control Projects**

The Park Rangers at the Corps of Engineers flood control projects have

duties in four main areas including natural resource management; recreation; visitor assistance; and interpretation. Other duties include flood control facility operations, maintenance, habitat management and office administration.

Park Rangers implement recreational programs and activities for the flood control projects. Some successful programs hosted at New England facilities include haunted dam tours,

*Continued on next page*



Photo by C.J. Allen

**Mike DeGrazia looks out at stormy waters from Stamford hurricane barrier. Hurricane barriers are an important part of flood protection.**

Junior Ranger Programs, disc golf course, guided hikes, stargazing tours, interpretive wildlife and history programs, environmental education camps for children, water safety programs, watchable wildlife programs, hiking outings, community group activities (model airplane groups, mountain men and Civil War reenactors, girl and boy scout groups), structured off-road motorcycle races, horseback riding trips, and winter recreation like ice skating, dog sled training, cross country skiing, and sledding activities.

Hidden gems at Corps projects abound. Community groups have used the recreation facilities for meetings, gatherings, camping, outings, and other group-sponsored events. Weddings have also been performed at the pictur-

esque natural areas. Some Corps sites have also been featured in television shows and commercials.

Corps Park Rangers are also the primary operators of one or more flood control facilities or hurricane protection gate systems and, during times of flooding, they use their knowledge of appropriate flood control regulations, in conjunction with expertise from the Reservoir Control Center, Basin Master Manual and Flood Emergency Plan policies, to manage water storage and releases.

The most visible and well-known role of the Corps of Engineers Park Ranger is that of interpretation. The Corps has an extensive program that reaches out from the flood control projects to local schools and New England-wide events such as the Big E. Another recent major public event was OpSail 2000 that was held at the Cape Cod Canal in July. Over 750,000 visitors came to watch the tall ships sail through the world's widest sea level canal.

The New England District Ranger Color Guard has marched in local parades and participated in official ceremonies carrying the American and Corps flags. Corps Park Rangers have organized successful environmental programs such as Earth Day activities and National Public Lands Day. They have also worked with programs that assist underprivileged children such as the Cooperative Federation For Educational Experiences (Project COFFEE), and environmental education programs with the Hodges Village Environmental Education Association.

All the flood control projects host at least one volunteer cleanup annually at their sites that not only improve the esthetics of the site, but also promote community involvement and environmental awareness.

Approximately 2,500 volunteers work over 10,000 hours at the Corps various sites. Each of the New England District flood control projects has various volunteer programs available to all ages and levels of physical ability. Some programs



Photo by Mark McInerney

**Viola Bramel plays a game with children at Concord Park.**



Photo by C.J. Allen

**Disc golf is a popular pastime at the Buffumville Dam facilities.**





Photo by C.J. Allen

*Park Rangers and Project Coffee unveil an improvement project.*

include, but are not limited to, administrative work, trail work, bridge building, wildlife observations and tracking, habitat enhancement projects, and facility improvement.

The Corps Park Rangers also work closely with other District elements such as Hazardous, Toxic, and Radiological Waste; Navigation; Emergency Operations; Real Estate; Regulatory; Public Affairs; and Engineering and Planning.

### **Corps' History in Flood Control**

The New England District has flood control projects throughout the six-state region. Combined, they safeguard 66,000 square miles, 6,100 miles of coastline, and make up 13 major river basins. The District operates and maintains 36 dams, 99 local protection projects, two hurricane barriers, 171 harbors, and 37 beach and streambank erosion projects. More than 16,000 vessels travel through the Cape Cod Canal



Photo by C.J. Allen

*The Ranger Color Guard marches in the Concord Patriot's Day parade.*

annually, which includes over 8,200 commercial ships carrying 15.5 tons (4,889 truckloads) of cargo.

The New England District's flood control projects initially cost \$538 million to build and have prevented damages well over \$2.8 billion. In 1998, approximately 9.7 million visitors enjoyed the recreational facilities created by the development of the flood control projects.

Interest in flood control by the federal government began in the 19th century. Congress created the Flood Control Act of 1936 after several deadly floods. The purpose of flood control work is to prevent flood damage through regulation of the flow of water and other means.

Prevention of flood-related damages can be accomplished with structural measures and nonstructural measures such as flood plain evacuation, flood proofing and floodway acquisition, that alter the way people use areas and reduce the susceptibility of human activities to flood risk.

Corps' flood control reservoirs are often designed and built for multiple-purpose uses, such as municipal and industrial water supply, navigation, irrigation, hydroelectric power, conservation of fish and wildlife, and recreation.

The Corps fights the nation's flood events not only by constructing and maintaining structures, but also by providing detailed technical information on flood hazards. Under the Flood Plain Management Services Program, the Corps provides, on request, flood hazard information, technical assistance and planning guidance to other federal agencies, states, local governments and private individuals. This information is designed to aid in planning for floods and regulation of flood plain areas, thus avoiding unwise development in flood-prone areas.

To learn more about the New England District flood control projects and recreation, please visit our website at [www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/recreati.htm](http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/recreati.htm).

Brochures on year-round recreational opportunities at the New England District flood control projects are available upon request. Please contact Sally Rigione at 978-318-8237 or Will Rogers at 978-318-8305. If you wish to volunteer at one of the lake projects, please call your local Corps Park Office or call Mr. Rogers.

In addition to flood control, the Corps has extensive programs in the areas of Regulatory, Base Realignment and Closure, Defense Environmental Restoration Program, Superfund, Military Construction, and Emergency Operations.

The Corps of Engineers provides military construction and installation support to Army and Air Force installations in New England. Major customers include the Soldiers System Center at Natick Labs, Mass; the Army's 94<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command; Devens (Mass.) Reserve Training Area; Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Mass.; and Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Mass.

The District also supports more than 125 recruiting centers throughout the region and supports Corps overseas projects in countries such as Kosovo and Israel.

# Dredging up the Past...



Photo by Rick Magee

***Bernie Manor, Construction/Operations, demonstrates the dam model to a visitor at the Big E in this late 1980's photo.***

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